

The Pileup

Newsletter of the CDXA

Charlotte Hamfest 2009

Despite being relocated about 15 miles to the northeast of where the 2008 Charlotte Hamfest was held, many familiar faces found their way to the Cabarrus Convention Center to take in the 2009 version of the Hamfest. Although a cold morning rain greeted Hamfest attendees on Saturday morning, plenty of free parking in close proximity to the front door of the arena seemed to lift spirits.

CDXA had its usual position near the Fourth Call Area Bureau desk and the ARRL card checkers. This location always seems to be a place that DXers congregate to greet old friends. And, there were plenty of old friends to meet in front of the CDXA booth as well as later at the ever popular CDXA Hamfest Banquet later that evening.

A special attraction at the CDXA booth in 2009 was a presentation Contest Manager Dick Williams prepared showing what a CW Skimmer display looked like during the Ducie Island DXpedition. The presentation caused many to stop at the booth and ask questions about CW Skimmer. It appeared that many hams who don't regularly participate in contests had something to learn about some of the new extensions of the hobby by the contesting crowd.

W4VHF	Ted Goldthorpe	President
AD4IE	Paul Ponak	Vice-Pres.
W3ZL	Cliff Wagoner	Sec.-Treas.
K4MD	Joe Simpkins	Cluster Mgr.
W3OA	Dick Williams	Contest Mgr.
W3GQ	Paul Sturpe	Cluster Mgr.- North Area
WB4BXW	Wayne Setzer	Webmaster
K8YC	John Scott	Editor

A gemstone globe being raffled off this year attracted the usual number of "oohs and aahs" from the crowd, and CDXA sold a number of tickets which will help us in supporting DXpeditions yet to be announced for 2009. To the right, we see Paul Sturpe, W3GQ, greeting Hamfest visitors.

Besides raffle tickets and CW Skimmer at the CDXA booth, we had copies of *The Pileup* and membership applications available at the booth, and we are pleased to report elsewhere in this issue the names of the five new members now in the CDXA ranks.



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CDXA PacketCluster & Other Communication Systems		
W4DXA (11 mi. NE of Mooresville)	144.93 MHz (1200 bits/second)	441.00 MHz (9600 bits/second)
K4MD Charlotte, NC	144.91 MHz (1200 bits/second)	Not Available on 9600 bits/second
K4MD (AR Cluster via Telnet)	k4md.no-ip.com	
NA4L (Near Hillsville, VA)	144.95 MHz (1200 bits/second) Connect to NA4L ("C NA4L")	
NA4L (AR Cluster via Telnet)	cdxa.no-ip.org	
CDXA Repeater 147.18 MHz (+600)	W4DXA, Near Fort Mill, SC	
World Wide Web Homepage	www.cdxa.org	
Wednesday Luncheon (11:30 AM)	Murphy's Food and Spirits, 131 E. Woodlawn Road, Charlotte, NC	

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To make one's way to the various forums in another part of the Cabarrus complex, you had to make your way through the WCARS group conducting license examinations, and many people were sitting for their exams. If memory serves the author well, Cameron Hason—the lad who passed his technician exam at age 6 last year—sat for and passed his General license exam this day.

Two forums of interest to DXers this year were Josh Fisher's (W4WJF) presentation on his experiences with the Willis Island (VK9DWX) DXpedition and Gregg Marco's (W6IZT) presentation on Desecheo Island.

Josh Fisher spoke of his impressions of how he felt a close connection with the "World Community" sitting on a desert island in the Coral Sea. Not only did he feel welcomed by his German hosts and considered a part of the team, he also marveled at the support he felt from voices and names he heard from folks back home when they worked Josh from halfway around the world. He found the experience of working with a highly competent, well organized team a pure delight, and he felt he learned a lot about handling BIG pileups. Josh also expressed his wonderment at all the experiences and benefits he has already enjoyed because of his interest in amateur radio.

Gregg Marco presented one of the first public reports on the recently concluded DXpedition to Desecheo (K5D). Weather played a big part in the need for alternative plans for getting on/off the island and making team switches in the middle of the DXpedition. High winds roiled up some big seas that negated plans to use a boat to access the island. (Take a look at the video for

February 18 on the K5D website, and note particularly the inlet normally used for landing on the island!) Instead, helicopter transport was required, significantly increasing the transportation expenses. Because of the proximity of Puerto Rico to Desecheo, many supplies/materials needed for the DXpedition were purchased in Puerto Rico. The man on the ground in Puerto Rico was Eladio Acevedo-Velez (WP3MW) who had a significant role in "gettin' it done". Extreme caution was required to avoid unexploded ordnance remaining from the days when Desecheo had been used for bombing/gunnery practice. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was very helpful in helping the team site some antennas higher up on the island to give the team a better takeoff path to North America and Asia. The expedition team is enthused that the experiences on Desecheo will foster a new era of cooperation with USFWS.

Saturday evening over 90 souls gathered for the CDXA Hamfest Banquet. Hats are off to the service staff at the restaurant for somehow getting all the food delivered to the tables in a crowded dining room. The banquet just seems to grow each year. We had lots of visitors again this year. Besides the "Tennessee 8" (or is it 12 or 14?) we had visitors from Yaesu, Ten-Tec, ARRL, CQ Magazine, and SEDCO. Lots of prizes again this year, too, from the list of visitors as well as from DX Publishing, N3FJP Software, DX Engineering, as well as gifts from some CDXA members. Yaesu provided a Grand Prize of an FT-857D radio this year. (See photo below.)

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The Pileup

Official Newsletter of the Carolina DX Association
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Published monthly 10 times per year, excluding the months of June and December.

The purpose of the association is to secure for the members the pleasures and benefits of the association of persons having a common interest in Amateur Radio.

Members of the CDXA shall adhere to "The Amateur's Code" as published from time to time in *The ARRL Handbook for Radio Amateurs*, and shall consist of those valid licensed amateur operators having an interest in promoting amateur radio. Long distance communications (DX) is of special interest to members of the association, but said interest is not a requirement of membership.

Dues are \$30 per year for those using the PacketCluster maintained by the Association, \$15 otherwise, payable each December. Dues are payable by check to the Secretary/Treasurer:

Cliff Wagoner, W3ZL
P. O. Box 577
Davidson, NC 28036

Address, telephone, and email address changes should be directed to the Secretary/Treasurer at the above address or via email at: jcw53@cornell.edu.



Dennis Motschenbacher, EVP of Yaesu, presents Nyles McKeithan (KS4S) an FT-857D as the Grand Door prize.

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More scenes from the Banquet follow below.



Joe (W8GEX) and Janet (W8CAA) Pater settle in for dinner while Lynn Lamb (W4NL) and Scott Robbins (W4PA) talk of the next contest.



Gregg Marco (W6IZT) and XYL Wendy seem satisfied that Gregg's forum presentation went well. Behind them Dennis Bodson and Dan Henderson discuss ARRL happenings.

Over the past several years, more and more folks have taken an interest in the Banquet. We've grown from a restaurant seating 60 to the same restaurant being sold out in recent years. This year's capacity was 90 and we had a waiting list for an evening of fun. We hope to see YOU at the Hamfest and the Banquet next year!!

Charlotte Hamfest QSL Checks

Gary Dixon reports the QSL field checking statistics for the Charlotte Hamfest were as follows for 2008 and 2009.

Year	DXCC Applications	No. of QSOs Checked
2008	21	1204
2009	19	660

The lack of solar activity continues to slow down the number of entities being worked.

There were also two ARRL WAS applications and one CQ WAZ application at the 2009 Hamfest. Hopefully, we'll see things begin to perk up by this time next year.

What are the Odds?

In the past 6 years, some interesting phenomena have occurred in the raffle which CDXA conducts at the Charlotte Hamfest. Six years ago, Bill LaMay (K3RMW) started an interesting string of events by winning a small generator. The winner of the raffle the next year was. . . Bill LaMay. Following Bill's successive wins, Jim Miller (K4SQR) won the raffle in the next two successive years. Last year Robert Bacharach (WA2EMF) won the raffle. In the raffle of 2009, Robert Bacharach won the prize! What are the odds?

Well, the old editor just happens to have some education in probability, so let's look at those odds. It is indeed unusual that there have been three different winners who've won in successive years, but since the raffles each can be considered "independent events", we cannot infer any probabilities related to the three separate winners. Yet we can compute the probability that a single person might win in two successive years with underlying assumptions that the winner buys the same number of tickets each year and the total number of tickets sold were the same in both years. If our winners in the past 6 years each bought 5 tickets and there were 250 tickets sold, the chances of winning in any one year would be 1 in 50 or 2%. In two successive years, then, the chances of winning are only 4 in 10,000. The chances of winning at least once in two years is 3.92%, and the chance of going home with nothing is 96.04%. Students of probability know that these numbers represent the chances in an infinite number of plays of the game. Bill, Jim, and Robert know that in only a few plays anything goes!

2009 NORTH CAROLINA QSO PARTY CDXA Club Effort using "W4DXA" at AA4S

By Ron Bailey, AA4S

It seemed so simple. Just throw up a couple of Field Day-type antennas; use the higher existing antennas as well; enlist the help of a couple of highly-skilled CDXA operators and pound away making QSOs for 10 hours. Well, it would have been if it weren't for the blizzard of 1 March 2009.

The reasons for choosing my QTH were two-fold: (1) the station at Discovery Place is no longer available; it has been dismantled to allow for renovation of that facility, (2) we felt we stood our best chance of winning this year given our experience of having conducted Field Day here in 2007 and 2008 and because of the variety of antennas which are available.

Things started innocently enough. Dick (W3OA) came about 45 minutes before the contest started at noon. He was busy setting up CW Skimmers when Cliff (W3ZL) arrived. It was raining with a 15 to 20 mph wind blowing. That would have been bad enough but there was a prediction of 100% chance of snow – the only question was, "How much would we get?"

I had set up three separate stations linked together with a computer network (the world's shortest Internet) so, if we had enough operators, we could operate on one band while monitoring the other two most useful bands. Our strategy was to use both CW and SSB on 20, 40, and 75/80 meters. I felt 10 and 15 meters would be unproductive and 160 meters was not part of the NCQP because of the CQ WW SSB contest conflict.

One ICOM IC-765 was set up on 20 meters with a 5 element 205CA Hy-Gain at 87 feet and an H Double-Bay with the top hung at 75 feet. A second IC-765 was set up on 40 meters with a 4-element KLM log-periodic yagi at 78 feet and an inverted vee at 52 feet for CW. An ICOM IC-7000 was set up for either 75/80m with a vertical dipole or 40 meter SSB using an inverted vee at 28 feet. Contest power is limited to 100 watts with only one transmitter being used at any given time.

Both IC-765s had computer interfaces which allowed frequency control and CW keying through NA Version 10.59 software. Beverage listening antennas should not normally have been needed at this time of year, but as it turned out the bands had enough snow static that they were worth their weight in gold on 40 and 80.

Dick started CQing on 20 SSB while Cliff tuned 40 CW and I watched CW Skimmer and also tuned 40.

This worked well as Dick got some action on 20 and I managed to locate W4MY/m with a great signal on 40 CW in Dare, Tyrrell, Hyde, and Beaufort Counties which I passed to Cliff who worked them for some nice multipliers while Dick stood by.

Apparently, the foul weather caused the SWR to go high on the 20 meter yagi making it unusable. But once again we were saved by the excellent performance of the H Double-Bay antenna and managed 97 QSOs and 26 multipliers by the time the band died at 2100 UTC.

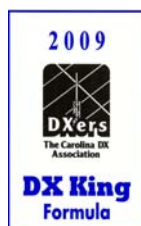
Meanwhile Cliff was having some good runs on 40 CW which started to go long by the time he left at 2000 UTC. After that, Dick and I alternated between (him on) 40 SSB and (me on) 80/20 CW until Tom (N4HN) arrived at 2100. I was having a good run on 80 CW which came alive early, but at 2124 I gave it up to Tom on 75 SSB. That's when the fun really began!

In the next 85 minutes Tom logged 87 QSOs and by the time he left at 0043 he had amassed 112 (22%) of our 505 QSOs and 29 (23%) of our 97 multipliers—most of them NC counties—contributing tremendously to our score. At one point I started to tell him it was snowing mightily and maybe it would be best for him to head home. But then I thought, "I can't stop him in the middle of such a great run!". Sorry, Tom. Hope the motel room in Shelby was nice.

I finished the last 2-1/4 hours on CW with a run of 94 QSOs. But by that time all the antennas were so badly iced and covered with snow that it was all the IC-765 antenna tuner could do to get 50 watts out with the SWR at 5:1. It was so bad the 75 meter inverted vee tuned better on CW!

Well, I had set a preliminary objective of 500 QSOs and as close to 100 multipliers as possible. So we can be proud of our performance of 505 / 97 for a score of 128,822 points under less than ideal conditions. Thanks to the operators who came and did a great job. Thanks even to the ones who were unable to make it but called to advise us of their situation.

(Ron was optimistic when he wrote this piece that our score would stand up as a winner. As we learned in the March, 2009 Pileup, that was not the case. On Saint Patrick's day, many were praying to this Patron Saint to keep Mr. Murphy far away from North Carolina for a few years. –The Editor)



DX King News

By Dick Williams, W3OA



(Note: The DX King Contest is a subcontest of CQ Magazine's DX Marathon competition being conducted by CDXA. Rules for the DX Marathon can be found at <http://dxmarathon.com/>. Rules for DX King competition can be found in the October 2008 issue of the Pileup, available from the archives on the CDXA website. —The Editor)

Item 1: Here are the scores reported to me as of March 31:

<u>Call</u>	<u>Category</u>	<u>Countries</u>	<u>Zones</u>	<u>Total</u>
N4ZC	Unlimited	235	40	275
K4MQG	Unlimited	228	40	268
W3GQ	Unlimited	182	38	220
W3OA	Unlimited	186	36	219
W4HG	Unlimited	181	36	217
K4YR*	Unlimited	176	40	216
N4PQX	Unlimited	166	40	206
AA4SC	Unlimited	160	39	199
WB4ROA	Unlimited	156	35	191
W3ZL	Formula	150	34	184
K4ESE	Unlimited	148	32	180
K4DGJ	Unlimited	137	33	170
KZ2I	Unlimited	131	38	169
N2TU	Unlimited	134	34	168
K8YC	Unlimited	128	31	159
W4ZV	Unlimited	108	30	138
N4UFP	Unlimited	108	29	137
WA3GNW	Formula	108	27	135
NK0S	Unlimited	98	29	127
WB2RHM	Unlimited	81	24	105

* New addition to the list this month.

Item 2: Don't forget to send me your CQ DX Marathon scores (w3oa@roadrunner.com) as of the last day of each month after your score reaches 100.

Welcome New Members!!

Hamfest is usually a good time for membership additions, and 2009 was no exception. This year offered a pleasant surprise when several of our out-of-town visitors to the Hamfest decided to "join up" for 2009.

Mary Hobart (K1MMR), ARRL Development Offi-

cer, came to Charlotte from Wethersfield, CT a few years back, and apparently enjoyed herself enough to become a member on this trip. Mary seems to be really getting into the hobby in a big way. Just the weekend before Charlotte's Hamfest she had been an operator in the contest effort at PJ2T. She told your Editor that she had a "blast" learning the ropes of serious contesting.

One of our forum speakers, **Gregg Marco (W6IZT)** up from Marietta, GA took time out after giving his presentation on the recent Desecheo DXpedition to sign up for CDXA membership. Later that evening Gregg and his wife Wendy enjoyed the Banquet with us.

Tim Vranich (N8KBM) came in from Denver (North Carolina, that is) to see the Hamfest and connect with CDXA for the future. **Dave Leonard (AE4AT)** from Charlotte arrived at the new Hamfest venue near Concord and decided to become a member. Maybe Dick Williams' CW Skimmer PowerPoint presentation attracted some interest. In the next year we hope to get to know more about the things that interest Tim and Dave.

Tommy Lineberry (NW4N), drove down from Galax, VA to see the Hamfest and renew his membership. We "lost" Tommy for a year due to some outside commitments, but he's back with us, and it was good to see Tommy again. If memory serves me right, Tommy goes back a long way to the days when N4ZC's contest station sported 7 towers and Tommy was an operator there.

To all five of you, welcome to CDXA!!!

Try as I might . . . ERRATA!

Each time I embark on last month's exercise to display the award status for DXCC Honor Roll, DXCC Challenge, and DXCC, I invariably end up with an error here or there. The most recent exercise was true to form. With now over 170 members and three lists to look through—even with help from a scripting program—errors do slip in.

Last month, three names were left off the DXCC list in transcribing them to the printed page. I apologize to Ben Wasilaskas (K4GHS), Thomas Wright (N4HN), and Nobby Mills (W4UFO) for not noticing only 105 of the 108 CDXA members I identified as holding DXCC certificates were on the printed list.

Also, I apologize to Dennis McAlpine (K2SX) for "mangling" his callsign in the Challenge Award list.

There, I feel better, now. —The Editor

Well Founded equals Well Grounded

By Paul Ponak, AD4IE

I was lucky to win the ARRL Handbook at the Charlotte Hamfest banquet and while going through it the other day I read, "Consider that Teflon tape is often used to seal pipe joints in modern repairs" footnote #1). I remembered that a while back I used Teflon tape when I replaced a hose bib (faucet) on the outside of my house. The ground system that bonds my tower, house, and station grounds is connected to that hose bib. I metered it and found that there was no conductivity between the ground wire and the copper pipe after the Teflon tape. I also found that there was no conductivity between the ground wire, through the clamp, and on to the faucet. I took apart the ground wire and clamp and cleaned all connections including the faucet by using a Dremel tool with a wire brush attachment. I discovered that there HAD been continuity between the faucet and copper pipe; I assume the process of screwing the hose bib on to the pipe adapter cut through the tape; however even though all connections were tight corrosion must have set in at some point. A good cleaning of all connection points proved successful. It's a good time of year to check out the outside connections.

(1)- ARRL Handbook 2009, pg. 3.8, column 2, paragraph 3

Roving Reporter Visits W3OA

For a springtime jaunt, the Roving Reporter wandered to near the place where North Carolina Highway 150 crosses Lake Norman to visit with CDXA's Contest Manager, Dick Williams (W3OA). Many of you have enjoyed Dick's contributions to the *Pileup* as he keeps us informed about contest results and his ongoing experimentation with CW Skimmer. Yet, many don't know too much more about Dick, so we thought we'd find out for you.

Roving Reporter (RR): Dick, the obligatory question must be, when and how did you get started in ham radio?

Dick Williams (W3OA): I got started in 1957 when I passed my Novice/Tech license examination and was granted the callsign KN9SGM/K9SGM. I had a group of buddies in my high school days in Evanston, Illinois that all were interested in "messing around" with 6 meter and 2 meter radios. One of the things that spurred us on was that our town would grant us the use of Gonset Communicators, crystal controlled AM rigs, as part of the Civil Defense program. Those old enough will re-

member that the "cold war" was cranking up early in the nuclear age. People were building nuclear bomb shelters in their backyards, and kids were doing "take cover" drills in schools. Civil Defense was on everyone's lips and that was also about the time the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) put up Sputnik. Americans realized that we were behind in the space race, and it was a sobering thought. All college ready youngsters were being encouraged to enter into science and engineering curricula.

An interesting experience from my Civil Defense days occurred in the Fall of 1959 when all the air raid sirens went off one evening creating wide spread consternation among the citizens. Our band of high school students were trying to figure out what our response should be. We figured it couldn't be an attack because Nikita Khrushchev was visiting Kansas at the time. And the weather was good so it couldn't be a weather emergency. We decided to do nothing and see what happened. It turned out we were right. The sirens had been sounded because the Chicago White Sox won the American League Pennant. Needless to say, the air raid sirens were never used that way again.

RR: Did you and your buddies have an "Elmer", then?

W3OA: Not an "Elmer" in the traditional sense. Most of us did both some individual and group studying to prepare us for the exam. One of the fellows' Dad was a Trustee of the amateur radio station at Northwestern University, and he administered the license exam whenever any one of us felt ready to sit for the exam.

RR: You didn't mention any HF interests in that era. Was HF in your vocabulary then?

W3OA: I did a small amount of HF, but it was only a small interest compared to being able to communicate around town on our CD rigs!

RR: Has your time in ham radio been uninterrupted since 1957?

W3OA: No. Like many, pressures of early career kept me away from ham radio, and my license lapsed along the way, sometime after I left Lehigh University in 1964. I was active through my college days however. I served as the President of the Lehigh University Amateur Radio Club. I think that was somewhat by default, because I was one of the few that attended most of the meetings!

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RR: At Lehigh, had you been drawn into the science and technology area by the events of the late 1950s?

W3OA: I wouldn't say that Sputnik and other happenings pushed me into it, but I did major in electrical engineering, and my interest in radio probably spurred that. I'll not forget the greeting lecture that the EE Department Chairman gave to the incoming freshman class. He stated, "Gentlemen, (there were no women at Lehigh in those days) for those of you who may have an interest in ham radio, electrical engineering and ham radio are not the same." I wasn't sure what I had gotten myself into as an incoming freshman, but I toughed it out. And, you know, the old Professor was right!

RR: When did you come back to ham radio?

W3OA: I went into the U.S. Air Force upon graduating from Lehigh in 1964. That was the beginning of 28 years in the Air Force. In 1980, I got the urge to reactivate my old interest. The closest FCC office was in San Diego, so I went to the examination center at the Federal Building and passed the Novice, Technician, General, and Advanced examinations in one sitting and was granted the callsign KD6KF. I took the Amateur Extra exam in 1985 and got the WE6H callsign. I guess you can say I was "hooked" by then.

RR: I suspect you moved around with the Air Force. Is that how you got the "3" call?

W3OA: I found having a West Coast callsign could be a problem when working DX from the East Coast. So in 1997, when I was assigned to the Pentagon and living in Virginia, I sought a 4th area call, but none were available to my liking, so found a call in the 3rd call area that was to my liking, and I've stuck with it.

RR: With all your years in radio since your Gonset days, what would you say is your favorite rig?

W3OA: I really liked my Kenwood TS-830 I bought in 1980 when I got my Advanced license. I still have that rig. It is outfitted with vacuum tube finals and was a pleasure to use. Yet, as personal computers have moved into the shack, the lack of a serial port to interface the radio to a PC made that rig take a back seat as more and more innovative uses of computer interfacing came to the fore.

RR: Do you have a favorite mode?

W3OA: I'd have to say that I really enjoy RTTY. In the early 1980s when I "reentered" the hobby, sending

pictures composed of character maps on old teletype machines was all the rage. We used 2m FM for those transmissions, and I became quite enamored of RTTY. Today, I use MMTTY and WinWarbler for most of my work with RTTY.

RR: That hasn't seemed to affect your DXCC results on SSB.

W3OA: No, I eventually did catch the fever for DXCC, and I hold 8BDXCC and I have 336 current DXCC entities confirmed. In the past few years I finally put up a 160m antenna, and I have over 100 entities worked on 160m—now I'm waiting for all the confirmations to come in. I put RTTY on the back burner for a while, but I've got 274 confirmed and 287 worked using RTTY. I really didn't do much with CW until I retired to NC in 2002, so my CW count is moving up at 217 confirmed now that I've been paying some attention to that mode.

RR: As CDXA's Contest Manager, have you always been a tester?

W3OA: Interesting question! Actually, I'd never done much contesting. It has only been since I joined CDXA that I've taken an interest in contesting. It rubs off on you when you're around those who enjoy the chase.

RR: Did you have any "Aha moments!" or humorous moments as a ham along the way?

W3OA: Nothing that really stands out. I did take a call from a scientist working in Antarctica shortly before Christmas one year. I didn't have a phone patch, so I had to act as a voice relay to get the message through. The scientist, working in the Antarctic summer called to tell his lady friend that he wouldn't be home for Christmas. It was not a pleasant message to deliver, and the chill on the phone was at least as cold as an Antarctica winter. My closest thing to an "aha moment" was when I was President of the Pentagon Amateur Radio Club (K4AF) and we ran a special event station on Armed Forces Day. It generated quite a pileup that day, and I finally got a glimmer of what being on the "other end" must be like at a rare DX location.

RR: How did you come to know the Carolina DX Association?

W3OA: My XYL, Ida, and I decided to retire here. Around the time we moved here, I began to look around to see if I could find a radio club. I found the CDXA on

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the Internet, and I began to read *The Pileup*. I decided that CDXA had an active group that would be worth getting to know. I started coming to a few lunches, and the rest is history.

RR: You live right across Lake Norman from Paul Sturpe, W3GQ. How did you do guys hook up?

W3OA: I started planning my antenna farm while still living in Virginia and I asked the CDXA President—I think it was Bob Burton at the time—if he could put out a message to the membership asking for information on a tower installer who could put up my tower so it would be ready when I moved here. Paul sent an email saying he didn't install antennas professionally but was always ready to help a fellow ham with an antenna project. I used the Internet and found my future home and his home were about one mile directly across the northern part of Lake Norman from one another. Our first face-to-face meeting was at a CDXA Wednesday lunch. Since that first meeting, we've found it's actually easier to take a boat across the lake to help each other than it is to drive a car because we both live on small peninsulas. Going by boat is more fun, too.

RR: Are any others in your family hams?

W3OA: I have a twin brother who holds the callsign WE2S. My XYL, Ida, has the callsign N4SBJ.

RR: You said you served in the USAF. Was radio communications part of your vocation?

W3OA: Not really. My career was mostly related to rocketry, with emphasis on Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) because of the Air Force's role in defense of our country during the "cold war". One of my assignments in Washington DC was at the program office for "Star Wars" during the early days of that program. I had an interesting tour at the Royal Air Force College in the UK teaching space systems to our ally and another working on aircraft instrumentation at the USAF Test Pilot School. My last three tours were all in the Washington DC area and I retired from the Air Force as a Colonel in 1992. Then I took a job with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). That job lasting 10 years was in intergovernmental relations at the interface between the Department of Defense and NASA. I retired for good in 2002 and we moved to North Carolina.

RR: So can we call you a NASA Executive, then?

W3OA: That's funny you asked that particular ques-

tion. Shortly after I occupied my house in 2002, I was out working to remove a silt fence by the waterfront. I was covered with mud. The Catawba Queen is an excursion boat that plies the northern end of Lake Norman. The Catawba Queen slowly went by the house loaded with passengers and on the boat's PA system the tour guide bellowed across the water that MY HOUSE was occupied by a recent NASA retiree. I didn't know if I should stand up and wave or hide behind the silt fence. In ensuing years, I was able to hear their spiel again and I had been promoted to a NASA Executive. I don't think I've been "promoted" to the rank of Astronaut as yet, but that may be in the works! Lou Dietrich, N2TU, took the ride on the Catawba Queen shortly after getting to know me. He asked the crew how they found out the information about the various homeowners along the lake's edge. They assured Lou that they fully verified all information with the person involved and asked permission to use it. I'm still awaiting the call to confirm my vitae.

RR: Well, Dick, with the excellent job you've done as CDXA's Contest Manager, we're sure you are executive material. Thank you for all you do for CDXA. The Editor sends along his thanks for all the great articles you provide to *The Pileup*.

A Cluster Reminder

A while back K4MD called our attention to the fact that VE7CC's very nice program for a telnet interface to our cluster has a default setting in the software that asks for all "missed spots" to be retrieved and downloaded upon initial entry to our AR-Cluster systems. The default setting affected the response time of the cluster each time a new user logged in. Because of this, K4MD asked all to set the parameter to ask for only 10 missed spots or to disable it altogether.

On a recent login to our NA4L site, your editor noticed one hundred "missed spots" were sent to his computer. A quick check of the parameter showed that it had reverted back to 100 spots. It is not clear whether this is because NA4L is a new node which has its own configuration file or whether it is because a new version of VE7CC's software had been downloaded in the interim.

All CDXA users of VE7CC's software are encouraged to check your software to ensure it is not asking for 100 missed spots. To do this, click on the "BANDS" tab and find the entry for "Missed Spots". Then, either check the "disable" box or change the "# Spots" to 15 or less. This will ensure all CDXA users get the best service from our spotting systems.

2009 ARRL DX Contest Wrap Up

By Dick Williams, W3OA

The 2009 edition of the ARRL International DX Contest is over, the logs are in, and the CDXA prizes were awarded at the Charlotte Hamfest Banquet if you were there. Those not at the Hamfest Banquet will have their awards sent to them. Here are the results, based on claimed scores. The final scores will appear in QST this fall.

CDXA members competed among themselves for first place prizes in six categories. Each received their choice of a \$50 Outback Steak House Gift card or a trophy plus a CDXA certificate. The winners were:

Top Combined Score: **N4ZC**, Roger, 2,546,580 points.

Top CW Score: **W3GQ**, Paul, 1,197,024 points

Top Phone Score: **W3OA**, Dick, 711,486 points

Top CW, low power, Score: **WA4DOU**, Roy, 617,067 points

Top Phone, Low Power, Score: **W4WNT**, Bill, 37,260 points

Top DXpedition Score: **KU4V**, Wayne, 754,007 points

Members who completed 1000 or more QSOs combined, CW and phone, received their choice of a \$25 Outback Steak House Gift card or a trophy plus a CDXA certificate. The winners in this category:

K2SX, Dennis KH6/AA4V, Steve N4PQX, Bob

Members who completed 500 or more QSOs combined, CW and phone, received a CDXA certificate and a CDXA patch. There were three winners in this category:

AD4IE, Paul N2TU, Lou K4YR, Pat

Members who completed 250 or more QSOs combined, CW and phone, received a CDXA patch. There were five winners in this category:

IN3ZNR, Brix K8YC, John W4LM, Larry
W4ZV, Bill WA3GNW, Bruce

Here are some **soapbox comments** from the CW and phone contests:

K2SX (CW): Here's my score for the DX Test. Not too bad given that my only antennas were a Butternut vertical and an inverted L for 160m. Thanks for the spots. It was fascinating to see all the spots come in all at once when the band was switched. The great thing is that many of the skimmer spots were clear of packet pileups, which was a great help. My main suggestion is some way of identifying which spots are skimmer vs. telnet, e.g. an asterisk or some other marking. That would tell us where the pileups are likely.

KH6/AA4V (CW): Thanks to all for the contacts. It was very difficult to get any run going due to LP and the fact that the nearest USA/VE station was 2500 miles away. I did well on 80 and 40 using a Butternut HF6V with 50 radials and a K3. Twenty meters was very, very crowded so it was all S&P. Almost nothing was heard from my (West) side of the island on 15M while the guys on the Hilo (East) side were running USA/VE rapidly. I did manage a lower 48 worked All States again this year and the best DX (that counted) was VO1. I logged an additional 150 contacts in this contest with stations who thought that KH6 was just another state (who knew!). Rather than try to explain why KH6 is not a state for the purposes of this test, I simply exchanged reports and logged each one for 0 points. I was called by juicy stuff like 7Q7, JT, OH, VU, YB, BA, KH2, VK6, VR2 and many, many JAs. All contacts will be on LoTW by the end of next week-end when I return to SC. Back to reality on Thursday after a delightful month on the Big Island.

KZ2I (CW): Put a few hours in this weekend. But the &^%\$ hand really stops me from extended keying. Even the constant pushing of keyer program keys! Oh, well. I guess if that is ALL I have to complain about...

N4PQX (CW): All S&P and very random operating, Sunday afternoon lost due to having to get a large dead oak tree (2ft+ diameter) off the fence when it fell from the neighbors. Best comment was from F6ARC on 80m last night who sent back huge signal after the normal report. Heard W3OA, K8YC, N4ZC, and N2TU.

N4ZC (CW): Much better than last year. I did better on every band. Only 141 K below the cw/ssb score from last year. It was all hunt and peck except for about a half hour of run on 15 Sunday morning.

W4LM (CW): Conditions were rough but some good openings on 40 and 80 meters.

W4ZV (160, CW): Wow, Topband surprises us again! As bad as conditions have been since the CQ 160 I thought several times about doing other things this weekend. I'm glad I didn't. At sunrise the first day I had 276/72 (including dupes & Ws) so I thought I had a good chance at the record which is 360/75 = 81,000 points. The second night was not nearly as good here except for a sunrise peak into UA6/UR5 and the QRN was much worse. I could hear stations calling that I know I could have heard if it had been as quiet as the first night. The first night I used diversity with a Beverage in one port and my TX array in the other. The noise was so bad the second night I could only use the Beverage (due to my TX array not being as directive off the back side toward the Gulf of Mexico where storm cell was located). No JAs or VKs the first day but I got 5 JAs and 3 VKs today. The biggest surprise was KG6DX (Guam) who I haven't worked since I left Colorado. Joel uses 500W to a Butternut I believe, and he called me at my exact sunrise. Congrats to Paul K8PO! One of us set a new record but it will be up to the log checkers to

(Continued on page 10)

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decide who. I'm happy just to break the W4 record (N4PN@W8JI). And thanks to all the callers for your patience...sorry if I was an alligator the second night!

WA4DOU (CW): Excellent conditions on the 1st night, especially 80m. Lots of QRN spoiled the second night. Ten meters and 15m were slightly better than last year—20m was "the" band.

N4PQX (Phone): Unassisted for the Phone contest, chair time 14hrs 34mins, sorry needed Saturday night and Sunday for R&R due to work lately, rode the bike up to the mountains today with Wanda. Had my best run ever on 20m, a 141 hour 1400z-1500z, truly amazing despite the heavy QRM. I even had one of the big K5 contest stations try to steal my pileup (the wall of sound) but I successfully defended "my turf". Nice JA/Asia opening on 20m Saturday afternoon, 15m was a disappointment—I had hoped for better on that band, and not much on 10m at all. Station worked pretty well despite the winter storm damage. I've got a full day of work for Don now, both rotors have problems (turn in the breeze, no brake, stuck at times etc), ropes and crossbooms for all of the wire antennas are all in need of repair on both towers. Fortunately nothing came completely down in the storm other than some limbs. Need to get everything fixed prior to CQWW.

N4ZC (Phone): I was so near to giving up so many times. My computer was a nightmare. It locked up and crashed so many times over the weekend. Some kind of bug got into my N1MM program. I was still able to up my score by 375k over last year. Counting both weekends I managed to add about a million points to my SSB/CW score over last year. (See write-up for N4ZC's CW operation, above.)

W4WNT (Phone): Nice conditions, but did not have the time to devote to the contest this time.

FCC's Rural Broadband Plan

(The following article is ARRL's Bulletin 19 printed in its entirety for your information. —The Editor)

QST de W1AW

ARRL Bulletin 19 ARLB019

>From ARRL Headquarters

Newington CT March 30, 2009

To all radio amateurs

ARLB019 ARRL Comments on FCC's Proposed Establishment of Rural Broadband Plan

In March 2009, the FCC invited comments via a Public Notice concerning the establishment of a comprehensive rural broadband strategy as part of the Department of Agriculture's Food, conservation and Energy Act of 2008, commonly known as the 2008 Farm Bill. Per the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009

(Recovery Act), Congress required the FCC to develop a "comprehensive national broadband plan." According to the FCC, they, Congress, and the Secretary of Agriculture "have repeatedly recognized the importance of ensuring access to advanced telecommunications and information services to all Americans, with a special focus on rural and hard-to-serve areas." The opportunity to comment on the Public Notice allowed the ARRL to express concerns about broadband over power lines (BPL) that the FCC has yet to satisfactorily address.

In the comments submitted by ARRL General Counsel Chris Imlay, W3KD, the ARRL reaffirms its support of broadband opportunities in rural areas. "ARRL is in agreement that broadband is critical to the health of agricultural and other businesses, and to the educational interests of Americans who live in rural areas," Imlay stated. Imlay commended the FCC in looking for broadband solutions on both the short and long term, as well as identifying how Federal programs "might overcome obstacles that currently impede rural broadband development."

Imlay pointed out that while the FCC and various power utilities have touted BPL as a promising means of providing rural broadband service, the ARRL contends that there are "prohibitive limitations (notable among these being the large number, and the cost, of repeaters and couplers required on overhead, medium voltage power lines for what amounts to a limited number of subscribers' homes in rural areas)."

The ARRL maintains that before BPL could ever be considered as a long-term source of broadband in rural America, the FCC must adopt rules that provide against BPL interference to the licensed radio services. Imlay said that studies have pointed out that BPL systems cause interference to licensed radio services in "certain configurations," such as international broadcasting, aeronautical, maritime, disaster relief, military and the Amateur Radio Service. "Of particular concern in rural areas is that low-band VHF radio systems are still common among state police, volunteer fire departments and other 'First Responder' public safety agencies," Imlay told the Commission, "BPL systems using this frequency range can and would, without additional rules, likely block communications between dispatch centers and emergency response vehicles." Imlay said that Amateur Radio is a "continuous, intensive user of the high-frequency bands in residential areas," and as such, "is arguably the most pervasively affected" by the FCC's plan to widely deploy BPL in rural areas. "Amateur

mobile operation is a particularly notable victim of BPL interference, since medium-voltage power lines run parallel to roadways. The Commission's BPL rules "include no effective protection."

Imlay reminded the Commission that the ARRL, as well as broadcast industry representatives, challenged the adequacy of the FCC's BPL interference rules: "On appeal to the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, the Court remanded the ET Docket 04-37 proceeding to the Commission with some very specific instructions, including reconsideration of assumptions relating to interference mitigation and disclosure of studies that had previously only been released in redacted form." Imlay pointed out that almost a year after the Court's decision, the Commission has done "literally nothing" to comply with the mandated instructions.

In the six years that the BPL rules have been on the Commission's docket, Imlay said that there has been "continuous and extensive debate about the interference potential of BPL." This, he told the FCC, has created "some uncertainty" amongst the various utilities and municipalities that have been eyeing BPL as a broadband delivery mechanism, with the Commission's inaction since the Court's decision, contributing to the uncertainty and "creating a dampening effect on the marketplace's interest in BPL." Before the FCC can implement a BPL policy for rural America, Imlay said that this "regulatory uncertainty" would need to be resolved.

The cost of implementing interference resolution must be considered by any rural broadband provider, Imlay said. While there is nothing in the FCC rules concerning this, Imlay reminded the Commission that the ARRL, "some eight months ago, offered a plan to the Commission's Office of Engineering and Technology in this regard. The revised regulation suggested by ARRL would be sufficient to reduce the potential interference from BPL to the point that it would be practical to address such instances on a case-by-case basis. Compliance is achievable with present BPL technology without significant limitation on BPL deployment, rural or otherwise. However, the absence of such rules is an obstacle to any consideration of BPL as a rural broadband mechanism and makes an evaluation of interference mitigation difficult or impossible." The deployment of a BPL system with a high potential for interference would require expensive mitigation afterwards, whereas if the potential is reduced to an acceptable level at the time of deployment, the need for mitigation—and therefore the cost—will be greatly reduced.

Imlay told the FCC that more than four years ago, the Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service (RUS) recognized "the need and willingness to utilize agency resources to remove interference concerns as an obstacle to rural broadband rollout (at least via BPL)." In January 2005 letter from then-RUS Administrator Hilda Gay Legg to ARRL Chief Executive Officer David Sumner, K1ZZ, regarding the RUS's Community Connect Grant Program, the RUS acknowledged that the cost of interference mitigation from BPL systems was a "significant" issue, and told the ARRL that "whenever a loan or grant application proposes broadband service delivery via BPL, the RUS will 'consider the cost of interference mitigation in [its] financial analysis.'" On March 20, current FCC Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein was nominated by President Barack Obama to become the next Administrator of the RUS.

Imlay told the Commission that "[i]f the means by which a grantee would comply with the Commission requirements for interference avoidance are not clear (which as of now they are not), it is unlikely that any applicant for a grant for broadband service using BPL could address the RUS's concern about interference." Therefore, Imlay said that it is necessary for the FCC to address the BPL interference issues on remand from the Court of Appeals "in order to remove this additional obstacle to an assessment of rural broadband opportunities via BPL."

The ARRL is "constrained" to note that the FCC has, over the past six years, "acted not as a dispassionate technical agency in the evaluation of certain broadband mechanisms, including BPL," Imlay noted, "instead acting as a self described 'cheerleader' for certain technologies, also including BPL." By these actions, Imlay said that the Commission "has ignored technical evidence that is contrary to its predisposition," and urged the FCC that "those same mistakes" not be repeated here.

Imlay reminded the Commission that President Barack Obama, on his inauguration day earlier this year, placed a series of goals on the White House Web site. "Among these," Imlay said, "was the following, obviously laudable goal: 'Restore Scientific Integrity to the White House: Restore the basic principle that government decisions should be based on the best-available, scientifically valid evidence and not on ideological predispositions.' The Commission has the opportunity to implement this goal in this Docket proceeding."

Saying that rural broadband opportunities should be "evaluated in terms of the scientific realities of the tech-

nologies on the table, and not on the basis of what the Commission wants to believe about them," the ARRL asked the FCC to fulfill "without further delay the obligations placed upon it by the United States Court of Appeals in ET Docket 04-37, and adopt such revised and additional rules for BPL so as to eliminate the extant interference potential of the technology." With the regulatory uncertainty and unresolved interference issues that continue to surround BPL, the resolution of ET Docket 04-37 is a "prerequisite for the development" of a plan for a complete evaluation of rural broadband opportunities and the development of a rural broadband plan.

Additional Banquet Photos



Above, Bill and Josh Fisher share adventures about Willis Island with table mates. Below, Roanoke Division Director Dennis Bodson (W4PWF) and Dan Henderson (N1ND) recount the day's activities.



Itice Goldthorpe (K4LVV) and Mary Hobart (K1MMH) share their ham radio experiences. Itice has earned her DXCC on 6m and 10m and can claim over 525 gridsquares on 6m. Mary, having just returned from operating a contest at PJ2T now can claim she knows what it is like to "be DX".



After everyone enjoyed their dinners, Ted Goldthorpe (W4VHF) and Cliff Wagoner (W3ZL) get down to "business". Through the graciousness of a number of contributors, many attendees went home with a door prize for the evening, and there were some dandy prizes as usual.

The Back Page

Visit Page 1 for a **recap of the events of Charlotte Hamfest 2009** and the CDXA Banquet.

North Carolina QSO Party “musings” by Ron Bailey, AA4S. See Page 4.

DX King Contest continues to draw interest. See Page 5.

Hamfest 2009 nets **5 new members**. Welcome! See Page 5.

Oops! Apologies to those missed in last month’s “standings” recap. See Page 5.

Roving Reporter catches up with Contest Manager, W3OA. See Page 6.

A **performance reminder** from our Cluster Manager. See Page 8.

And the winners are. . . wrap-up of the **ARRL International DX Contest**. See Page 9.

Read the ARRL’s response to an invitation to comment on **FCC’s Rural Broadband Plans**. See Page 10.

See the **Hamfest/Banquet Photo Gallery** on Page 12.

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See something wrong with your address label? Notify W3ZL at once, please.